

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims below replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims:

1. (Cancelled)
2. (Currently Amended) The distributed streaming media server system of claim [[1]] 4 wherein the multimedia files of the distributed streaming media server system comprise video files.
3. (Cancelled)
4. (Currently Amended) ~~The distributed streaming media server system of claim 1~~ A distributed streaming media server system, comprising:  
a plurality of streaming media servers that each store a selection of multimedia files;  
a master streaming media server communicatively coupled to the plurality of streaming media servers and that compiles mapping information regarding a location of each of the multimedia files that are stored on each of the plurality of streaming media servers; and  
at least one streaming media client that requests access to a multimedia file through the master streaming media server and receives setup information regarding the requested multimedia file such that the at least one streaming media client may directly access the multimedia file from one of the plurality of streaming media servers,  
wherein the at least one streaming media client receives the setup information from one of the plurality of streaming media servers.
5. (Currently Amended) The distributed streaming media server system of claim [[1]] 4 wherein the request for access to the multimedia file by the at least one streaming media client is multiplexed.

6. (Currently Amended) The distributed streaming media server system of claim [[1]] 4 wherein the master streaming media server considers load balancing when determining which of the plurality of streaming media servers is selected for access by the at least one streaming media client.

7. (Currently Amended) The distributed streaming media server system of claim [[1]] 4 wherein the master streaming media server includes a socket thread, a request queue, and request threads to initiate transmission of information between the at least one streaming media client and the plurality of streaming media servers.

8. (Currently Amended) The distributed streaming media server system of claim [[1]] 4 wherein the master streaming media server includes a load poll thread, a load average queue, and load average threads to determine the load balancing among the plurality of streaming media servers.

9. (Currently Amended) The distributed streaming media server system of claim [[1]] 4 wherein the master streaming media server selects one of the plurality of streaming media servers different from the master streaming media server to access for the requested multimedia file and redirects the requesting client to exchange information directly with the one of the plurality of streaming media servers.

10. (Currently Amended) The distributed streaming media server system of claim [[1]] 4 wherein the master streaming media server utilizes a logical content database that is queried by the master streaming media server to identify which of the plurality of streaming media servers possesses a specific streaming media file that fulfills a request for the specific streaming media file originating from the at least one streaming media client.

11. (Currently Amended) The distributed streaming media server system as set forth in claim [[1]] 4 wherein the at least one streaming media client, the master streaming media server, and one of the plurality of streaming media servers utilize a

connectionless and stateless communications protocol between the at least one streaming media client and the master streaming media server, between the master streaming media server and the one of the plurality of streaming media servers, and between the one of the plurality of the streaming media servers and the at least one streaming media client.

12. (Original) The distributed streaming media server system as set forth in claim 11 wherein the connectionless and stateless communications protocol is integrated directly into the master streaming media server, the one of the plurality of streaming media servers, and the at least one streaming media client.

13. - 20. (Cancelled)

21. (New) A method of enabling retrieval of a media file, comprising:  
receiving, at a master server, a user request for the media file from a streaming media client;  
selecting, at the master server, based on the user request, one of a plurality of streaming media servers for handling the user request for the media file; and  
sending, from the master server to the selected one of the plurality of streaming media servers, a request to enable the selected streaming media server to send information to the streaming media client for establishing a streaming session between the streaming media client and the selected streaming media server.

22. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein selecting the one of the plurality of streaming media servers is performed to achieve load balancing.

23. (New) The method of claim 22, further comprising accessing by the master server, mapping information to determine which of the plurality of streaming media servers contains the requested media file.

24. (New) The method of claim 22, further comprising contacting each of the streaming media servers to determine its operational status, wherein selecting one of the plurality of streaming media servers is further based on the determined operational status.

25. (New) The method of claim 22, further comprising examining bandwidth history of the plurality of streaming media servers, wherein selecting one of the plurality of streaming media servers is further based on the bandwidth history.

26. (New) The method of claim 22, further comprising determining which of the plurality of streaming media servers are equipped to fulfill the request for the media file, wherein selecting one of the plurality of streaming media servers is further based on the determining.

27. (New) The method of claim 21, wherein selecting one of the streaming media servers comprises selecting one of the streaming media servers different from the master server.

28. (New) A system capable of communicating with a streaming media client and a plurality of streaming media servers, comprising:

an interface to receive a user request for a media file from the streaming media client over a network; and

a module to:

select, based on the user request, one of the plurality of streaming media servers separate from the system for handling the user request for the media file,

send, to the selected one of the plurality of streaming media servers, a request to enable the selected streaming media server to send information to the streaming media client for establishing a streaming session between the streaming media client and the selected streaming media server.

29. (New) The system of claim 28, the module to select the one of the plurality of streaming media servers to achieve load balancing.

30. (New) The system of claim 29, the module to further access mapping information to determine which of the plurality of streaming media servers contains the requested media file.

31. (New) The system of claim 30, wherein the media file comprises a video file.

32. (New) The system of claim 28, the module to further exam bandwidth history of the plurality of streaming media servers,  
wherein the module selects one of the plurality of streaming media servers based on the examination of the bandwidth history.

33. (New) The distributed streaming media server system of claim 5, wherein the streaming media server from which the at least one streaming media client receives the setup information is separate from the master streaming media server.